



TESTIMONY

Submitted by Rebecca Tamsin, LCSW
Supervisor of Counseling Services
Masonicare Home Health and Hospice

Human Services Public Hearing

February 7, 2023

SUPPORT: SB 946 AN ACT CONCERNING TO THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrist and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Rebecca Tamsin. I am the Supervisor of Counseling Services at Masonicare Home Health and Hospice and I oversee all of our social workers statewide. It is my privilege to be speaking with you today on behalf of our organization.

Masonicare has a census statewide of 1245 patients combined for home health and hospice. Medicaid patients represent about 10% of our total census. Currently, Medicaid does not reimburse for social work services within home health care agencies. Last fiscal year our agency covered \$16,488 for necessary social work visits for the Medicaid population.

Often times, social work services are desperately needed by patients who have Medicaid. These cases are often complex, needing significant follow up, and the state DSS caseworkers simply do not have the time to assist. Hour long wait times on the phone and limited access to state caseworkers create barriers for patients receiving the help they need. During our social work visits, we have been able to assist patients with getting their benefits reinstated; help with redetermination paperwork; assisting patients in applying for waiver programs and coordinating other community resources to maintain the needs of our patients within the home setting.

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Homecare social work visits can be very beneficial for someone who already has the Homecare Program for the Elders. We recently had a case where a gentleman was developing new wounds, was not being properly cared for by family members and was in need of additional care in the home above and beyond what our agency and the Homecare Program for the Elders was providing. Our social worker was able to visit to address issues of family discord, helped develop a safe plan of care with the family and coordinated with the case manager at CCCI to advocate for increased care in the home. Ultimately, with the help of our social workers' interventions, this gentleman was approved for a live-in caregiver through the Homecare Program for the Elders.

Since the COVID 19 Pandemic, we have seen an increase in patients who struggle with health, financial, psychosocial and emotional issues. By having social workers visit beneficiaries in their home through homecare services, we can help address these issues first hand. This can help to ensure that patients receive the services they need and that they can remain in the setting of their choice which is home. The cost savings to keeping patients out of the ED/hospitals and nursing homes would be a benefit to the state. Having SB 946 passed would help to ensure that even more patients with Medicaid could get the medical social work services that they need in home. I urge you to pass SB 946 and any other Bill that comes before you for medical social work services within the homecare setting for all people who have Medicaid—waiver and non-waiver populations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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